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ABSTRACT

The University of New Mexico's College of Education initiated a two-pronged approach to developing multiculturally competent teachers who would be comfortable working on American Indian reservations. Four groups were recruited. Mentor teachers included American Indian and Euro-American teachers working in rural Pueblo schools and Hispanic and Euro-American teachers working in urban Albuquerque schools. Student teachers included Euro-American students currently attending the university and American Indian students who had dropped out of college due to financial problems and who were offered financial assistance to return. All but one teacher and all students were female. Each of the Euro-American students was matched with an Indian partner. Prior to commencement of student teaching, the mentor teachers met weekly in a graduate course and used an electronic bulletin board system to plan the student teaching experience, which would take place in both Albuquerque and reservation schools. During and after student teaching, both mentor teachers and students spoke of their personal growth in cross-cultural understanding and increased sensitivity to cultural issues in the classroom. The student partners developed close personal relationships that greatly influenced their understanding of the opposite culture. Contains 10 references. (SV)

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RC 020392

RURAL RESERVATION/URBAN CROSS-CULTURAL TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN INDIAN AND NON-INDIAN TEACHER TRAINEES

Laura B. Smolkin and Joseph H. Suina — United States of America

In her weekly self-evaluation, Julie, self-described as "a little Jewish girl from New York," ponders her first week at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Laguna Elementary School.

What was most important for me this week was the experiencing of being in a monocultural room again. When I taught Hebrew school, that was the last time. I was reminded of the need to know 'the ways," and extending the feeling to the students that I "understood." I don't really, and it's certainly more difficult than being in the Hebrew school, since

I'm part of that culture. But I feel close to them because I feel close to Kelly [her Indian partner]. I am confused about adapting to my new environment. sometimes feel the need to be on the defensive, I sometimes feel overly naive. I even sometimes feel like I don't belong.

Julie is a member of a new teacher preparation effort at the University of New Mexico which seeks to better prepare teachers for the diversity they will find in today's schools. In his 1993 special report "Educating Teachers for Cultural Diversity", Kenneth Zeichner reviews pertinent literature, outlining critical aspects of the preparation of teachers in America. Pointing out the mismatch between the preservice teacher population and the students they are likely to teach, Zeichner explains that most teacher education students are white, female, monolingual with "very limited interracial and intercultural experience." According to Burstein and Cabello (1989); the percentage of minority (non-white) teachers has been declining significantly over the past decade, Colleges of Education, then, which wish to adequately prepare teachers for the populations that they are likely to teach, appear to need a two-pronged approach in their teacher preparation programs. The first, clearly, is to better prepare the middle-class, white, female students who desire teaching as a career. The second, equally important, is to recruit, and retain, individuals from non-white communities. Wilson (1991) suggests that in order to accomplish this goal, universities must provide a "nurturing culture." In this paper, we describe a program created at the University of New Mexico which sought to achieve both the above mentioned goals, by focusing on American Indian students.

American Indians of New Mexico

New Mexico is home to three major American Indian groups the Navajo, the PineDos, and the Apache. The Navajo and Apache, both Athabascan-speaking, nomadic tribes. migrated into the Southwestern United States approximately 450 years ago. The Pueblos, descendants of the Anasazi cliff dwellers, were indigenous to this region hundreds of years before the appearance of other tribes or European conquerors (see Dutton, 1983). While the influence of the dominant, Euro-American society is clearly visible in terms of material possessions and subsistence patterns, traditional values and processes of Pueblo enculturation remain intact. The same may be said of the Navajo peoples, particularly those who live in remote rural settings, although increasing Native language loss is being reported for all New Mexico Indian groups.

Indian Teacher Preparation Efforts at the University of New Mexico

From the early 1970's through the early 1980's, the College of Education of the University of New Mexico offered on-site teacher education programs for the Pueblos, Apaches, and Navajos of New Mexico and parts of Arizona. For many American Indians, these federally funded programs, available within short distances of their homes, afforded their first, and for some, their only opportunity for higher education. Well over 100 Pueblo and Apache students received their degrees in teaching. For the Navajos a considerably larger tribe, more than 400 students graduated as teachers. With the introduction of Reaganomics, federal support for these programs halted abruptly.

Given that schools are the largest employers on most reservations, this programs yielded considerable benefits for individuals and their tribes. A survey of Pueblo program graduates (Suina & Becker, 1991) indicated that well over 80% were still engaged in Indian education, on or near their reservations. Two former teaching assistants now serve as principals of schools, while many others serve in key tribal leadership roles. While there has been criticism of the strength of the University-delivered curriculum in terms of preparing teachers to provide culturally- relevant teaching (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1992), no one has questioned the professional development of the involved individuals, nor the impact the programs have had on each of the tribes involved. However, despite the outcomes of these programs, Native teachers still comprise only 2% of the state's teaching force, while American Indian students constitute 10.4% of New Mexico's public school population.

A second survey (Suina & Becker, 1993) was conducted with 36 former, unfinished students to determine the reasons for their incomplete course work. Completion rate of questionnaires was 66 percent. Asked why they had not completed their programs, 18 of 24 indicated that they lacked financial support. Additional reasons included family responsibilities, village responsibilities, and lack of transportation. Asked what support would be needed for them to complete their programs of study, 20 of the 24 cited financial support, while 15 of 24 mentioned academic support. The need for emotional support was also mentioned. Ten of the 24 indicated that fear of failing the National Teacher Exam kept was an additional factor for their incomplete programs.

Teacher Preparation for non-Indians at the University of New Mexico

The University of New Mexico's College of Education has received numerous awards for its innovative teacher preparation programs. Key to these awards has been a long-standing collaborative program with the Albuquerque Public Schools, the state's largest school district within which the University is physically located. For approximately twenty years, students have prepared through a "blocked" program of methods courses. Issues of cultural diversity received attention during the first semester through intermittent presentations on topics such as traditional values, bilingual education, research on teacher treatment of minority students, multicultural children's literature, etc. Such presentations were completely absent during the math and science methods block. All student teaching took place within the Albuquerque Public School settings. where most students found employment upon completion of their degrees. In terms of teacher preparation programs, the block preparation for diversity would be seen as a segregated, or "add-on" program (Bennett, 1988).

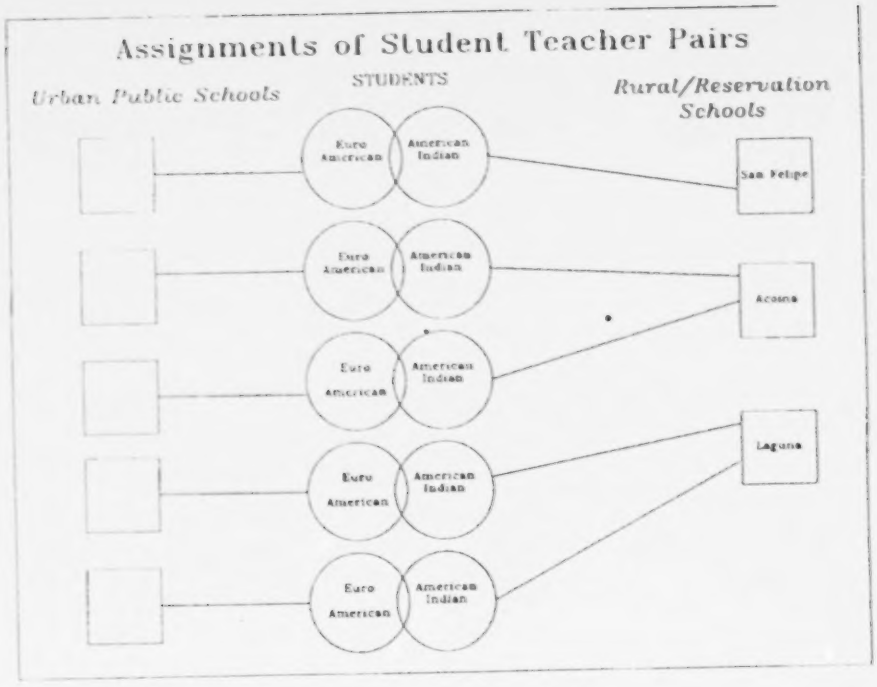
While the program included a student teaching population of between twenty to thirty percent Hispanic-Americans, most semesters found no Indian students present. In general, then, the University's program was quite similar to the situation described in the introduction, with high numbers of Euro-American graduates.

Designing a New Program

Given the two-pronged approach described in the introduction, with considerable attention to the existing literature on preparing teachers for diversity, We created a three phased model. We were firmly committed to the belief that teacher education is not localized to preservice experiences, but extends throughout the career of the classroom teacher. Maintaining that work with student teachers should enhance inservice teachers' professional growth, we decided to create, rather than a professional development school (PbS) (e.g., Holmes Group, 1990), a professional development community instead. This community would extend beyond the borders of the Albuquerque Public School district into the reservation schools of the Southern Pueblos Agency, and would bring together master teachers who worked in both rural/reservation settings with those who worked in Albuquerque's urban and suburban populations. These mentor teachers were to spend a semester, Phase I, discussing the preparation of future teachers, given the settings and communities within which the preservice teachers were to be placed. These discussions were to take place during weekly meetings and over electronic mail as well.

Phases II and III represented the preservice teachers' classroom teaching experiences. We chose to employ what Zeichner (1993) refers to as an integrated approach, in which we would focus, through field experience, "on preparing teachers to educate a variety of different groups of students of color" (p. 13). We opted for student teacher partnerships, to consist of one student from the dominant society, in New Mexico consisting of both Euro- and Hispanic-Americans, and one student from the minority culture, American Indians. During one semester, the partners would be placed in rural/reservation settings, while during the other, they would find themselves in multicultural urban settings. Through these dual assignments, we hoped to address the first prong, preparing Euro-American teachers for diversity, by affecting attitude change through having them, as Banks (1991) suggests,

FIGURE 1



"consider alternative attitudes and values and to personally confront some of their latent values and attitudes toward other races" (p. 141). We also sought to address the second prong of teacher preparation for diversity; we decided to recruit Indian students for the program.

We determined that we would pair a dominant society student with an American Indian student. Figure 1 above shows the configuration of students, and the assignments for each pair.

In this way, each might assist the other in dealing with the novel situations that they would encounter as they moved between two unfamiliar worlds.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Mentor Teachers

In early fall, 1993, we presented the model to the Southern Pueblos Agency board, seeking input and support from these representatives of Pueblo Indian communities. Subsequently, we visited the five Pueblo reservation schools served by the Agency. After our presentation to potential mentor teachers at Isleta Pueblo, we were invited to address teachers at Laguna Pueblo by the principal of the elementary school. Laguna, separated several years ago from the larger Southern Prneblos Agency, now exists as its own agency.

Interested teachers were requested to submit a brief personal statement on teaching, as well as to submit a letter of support from their principals. Upon receipt of the materials, in consultation with Valentino Cordova, head of the Southern PineDos Agency Education office, we accepted six agency teachers. Two American Indian women from Acoma Pueblo, one Euro-American woman from San Felipe Pueblo, and three Euro-Americans, two women, one man, from Laguna Pueblo's schools. Both American Indian women had been graduates of the University efforts of the 1970's.

From the Albuquerque Public Schools we recruited five teachers. Two Hispanic women worked in bilingual classrooms in urban Albuquerque. The three EuroAmerican women worked with varied population, ranging from children living in a trailer park to those residing in an upper-middle class suburban development.

Student Teachers

In late fall, 1993, we began recruitment of the target population, six Pueblo students who had begun, but failed to complete, their work under the University's on-site All Indian Pueblo Council Teacher Preparation Program. Given the results of the 1993 survey, we knew that finances represented a great hurdle to the completion of the students' programs, and so determined to offer the dual site placements during a single semester.

In our first efforts, we again visited the six agency schools from which we had recruited the mentor teachers. We explained to the teaching assistants that they would need to leave their jobs in order to student teach full-time during the spring; however, we would be able to pay for their tuition and offer a small stipend. We spoke with more than 30 assistants; only four made the decision to leave their positions.

Oinring a Reduction in Forces (RIF) the year prior, a number of assistants had lost their positions; perhaps this made many reluctant to leave. An assistant's pay is, at best, modest; for those living on reservations, it represents a reliable, consistent income for families.

We then pursued the teaching assistants who had lost their positions during the RIF. of the seven with whom we met, two made the decision to leave their employment at a daycare center to join the program, giving us our six students. In early January, two of the recruited six informed us of their decision not to resume their studies. We did, however, gain one additional Native student. Considerably younger and more 'Worldly" than the other women, the fifth student was Navajo/Cheyenne/Sioux.

We understood Wilson's (1991) concept of a nurturing environment. For our Indian students, we carefully examined their programs of study, we assisted them with the registration, which must have seemed rather daunting with its numerous lines and forms, and we accompanied them to the financial aid officer. We let them know that we were available, even lending them money for books or gas.

To recruit their counterparts, we explained the program and its goals to students in the Block program. Of the thirty-six students, seven applied. We matched five of them with an Indian partner.

Procedures

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Mentor Teachers

Teachers began meeting on a weekly basis under the auspices of a graduate level course on Teaching and Learning. After some initial readings on preparation of teachers for culturally diverse children, the teachers began planning the experiences they believed would best prepare the students to become strong teachers.

In February, all mentor teachers were supplied with modem-equipped computers. All public messages sent on the mentor teachers' bulletin board were saved for analysis.

All mentor teachers were interviewed at the conclusion of the semester.

Student Teachers

Student teachers were required to write weekly reflections, as Julie's words demonstrate. In addition, seven of the 10 participated in a group discussion at the end of the semester.

Data Analysis

All data have been analyzed qualitatively to locate emerging themes. Written records, interviews, and group discussions are seen to triangulate the findings.

Additionally, e-mail messages of the mentor teachers have been quantitatively examined.

RESULTS

Responses to the Program: Mentor Teachers

Electronic Mail

In the period ranging from February 2, 1994 through May 23, 1994, mentor teachers sent 194 messages. Fifty-eight were sent in February, seventy-one were sent in March, the month when student teachers arrived in their classrooms, twenty- four were sent in April, while forty-one were sent in May. Most messages sent in May dealt with arrangements for the next school year.

Each e-mail message was analyzed for its content. In certain cases, messages were coded into two categories. By far, the most messages (68) were sent in the "Refrigerator Notes" category, which encompassed reminders of various sorts, such as the location for a meeting, or the type of materials teachers were expected to bring to the upcoming meetings. Typical is the following message:

> Hi, this is Laura letting you know that Cecilia Montoya is joining us on the TEAMS project.

The next largest category of messages (41) concerned how the electronic mail system was functioning. Typical is the following message.

> Don't worry. If you mess up, just turn the machine off. And everything will be okay.

The third greatest number of messages (22) were found in the category "Issues for Decision and Discussion." The following message from tinda is typical.

> Carol and I feel that it is extremely important for the student teachers to have some time and experiences with planning lessons, following through with the presentation of those lessons, and reflecting upon the lessons and how they went, what could or should be different next time and how they met or did not meet specific objectives. We feel that it is also important to spend time reflecting each day on what has taken place, what we have learned about the students and our interactions.

In all 19 categories were created to account for the content of the mentor teacher messages. Increased mentor teacher growth in multicultural sensitivity is visible in Catherine's message of May 8.

> I went to the mini math workshop yesterday at the resource center and attended a session that was somewhat thought provoking. The title was something about patterns and Native American students and had little to do with math. There was a discussion on the book **Ten Little Rabbits** and the word Indian. Sometimes I feel so ignorant about what is appropriate and what isn't. Sometimes I don't see the difference between stereotyping and honoring someone's culture. I think lots of teachers avoid multicultural lessons because they are afraid they might offend. Does any of that make sense?

Individual Interviews

In their individual interviews, Euro-American mentor teachers from APS reflected upon

their personal growth in cross-cultural understanding. tinda spoke first of her EuroAmerica student, then of herself.

> I think it made Nora look at things differently, it certainly made me look at things differently. kings I would never have expected. Maybe because I'm from the supposedly dominant culture, you just accept things at this value and assume that other people accept them that way too, without giving it too much thought at some times.

Mentor teachers agreed the program had provided an exceptionally strong experience for the students. Martha, a Ernro-American with many years teaching in Pueblo schools commented on the importance of the dual-site assignment.

> Working with Native American children in Albuquerque is a heck of a lot different than working out on the reservation. Student teachers who were coming out to our school to be interviewed said, "Oh, but we get so many diverse cultures in APS." But there's a big difference between APS children or Albuquerque children and children out in the rural areas, whether or not you teach on a reservation, whether you're just teaching in a small town school, or a totally Hispanic school. There's a big difference. And they need to see those differences.

Mentor teachers had many suggestions for improving the program, but felt that it had succeeded in stressing cross-cultural issues.

Responses to the Program: Student Teachers' Group Discussion

During their group discussion, the students were asked to consider their total preparation at the University, the program itself, and then the impact that the program had on their cross-cultural knowledge. In Table 1 below, the students' responses to similarities and differences to being in the two cultural settings are displayed.

The students demonstrate an awareness of many concerns in Indian education. Critical is the question of how to involve parents in their children's education. Karen, the youngest of the Indian women, repeatedly stressed during this topic's discussion that there was history to be considered, which included not only parents', but also grandparents', experiences with 'she White Man's schools."

TABLE 1.

Contrasting Rural and Urban Schools As Described by Student Teachers

Similarities	Urban	Rural/Reservation
'Kids are kids' • they chat • they get off task	multicultural class • some children monolingual Spanish	monocultural class • more self-esteem • more secure • more connected to community: family relationships
"They want the same things' • eager to learn • eager to please • sensitive feelings • want security	• culture not acknowledged some parental disengagement • monolingual Spanish	little parental involvement • less presence • appear at holidays • appear at bake sales • do not support teacher or homework • checked kids out of school more often

warned not to touch children	children were warm • wanted to by physically close
some children monolingual in Spanish	children were respectful children spoke English
assessment: portfolios & standardized testing	heavy emphasis on standardized testing Principal and Board members highly present at Laguna, but not Acoma

Also noteworthy is the students' focus on the issue of physical proximity. Within the metropolitan setting, there are taboos; there is a fear of suit from parents. Within the Pueblo, children, secure in what Julie calls their monoculturalism, welcome the warmth which teachers share.

Finally, the students' comments on the avoidance of culture within the urban multicultural classroom seem very quite accurate. As the mentor teacher Catherine has expressed, there is fear in being offensive. Avoidance seems the safest route.

The students were also asked to address what they had learned from their partners. These results can be seen in Table 2 below.

The partners had grown genuinely fond of each other. Julie reported an "instant bonding" between herself and Karen. Kristen and her Indian partner Laurencita had become exceptionally close. Kristen had gone to Laurencita's pueblo on a Feast Day, fulfilling the function of hostess in Laurencita's home so that Laurencita herself might be free to take part in the traditional Corn Dance.

Just as mentor teacher Linda had indicated in her interview, students felt that working with a person of another culture had greatly impacted their understandings of the workings of that culture. That this learning went both ways is clear in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Learning from Partners: A cross-cultural experience

Non-Indian Students	Indian Students
• Gained information about another culture - through talk - through "osmosis," just being together - through participation in traditional events, such as Pow Wow and Feast day	• Gained a friend • Through observing partner, - learned how to assemble resources - learned how to be more organized
• Developed personal relations - through meeting other's families - through spending time in each other's homes	• Helping hand for one another - saw partner as support for finishing student teaching

Indian students spoke of how they observed their partners' approaches to various tasks, and learned from them.

Finally, the students were asked to cite some surprising moments when they had learned about culture. These comments appear in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3

Responses and Surprises in Working in Two Cultural Settings

APS: Indian Students	BIA: Non-Indian	BIA: Indian Students
• Scared of rejection by parents and staff	• checked with partner to see if materials were appropriate	• surprised that children would be allowed to bury themselves in sand
• concerned about speaking properly	• felt isolation as only as only non-Indian	• surprised at children's lack of knowledge of the Rio Grande Pueblos
• difficulties convincing children about	• felt fear of rejection by staff of school	• surprised that children didn't have to stand for Pledge to flag
		• surprised at children's racist remarks
		• surprised that children would correct mispronunciations
		• strongly aware of Native language & children's strong attachment to their culture

Perhaps most critical here is that both Indian and non-Indian students, as Julie's opening remarks demonstrate, feared rejection in the culture they did not know.

DISCUSSION

From the responses of the student teachers, from the responses of the mentor teachers, it seems clear that the program is achieving its goal. This past week, we were informed that Linda, after so many years of being a teaching assistant, has been hired as a teacher at Acoma's Sky City Elementary. Happily, so, too, has been her new friend Kristen. It gave us great pleasure to hear the principal comment "You are turning out some excellent teachers."

While there have been other "immersion" teacher education programs, we believe ours to be the first in which students are paired with a culturally-different other. If, as Banks (1991) suggests that it is crucial for perspective teachers "to reflect upon the consequences of their attitudes and values" (p. 141), then it would appear that the presence of a knowledgeable adult companion has immeasurable value. We are unsure whether the students or the mentor teachers learned more about their personal attitudes and stances from the presence of the partnerships in the two teaching situations.

What remains a source of great difficulty for us is the recruitment and retention of Indian students. Money is a very definite consideration. We have been lucky to have had support from a US West grant, and from the University itself. Those monies are not permanent; we must now seek funding elsewhere. We also know that those funds we had available are too meager for some. Joan, one of Indian students, has left the program after multiple arguments with her spouse about the income she no longer contributes and about how she is attempting to rise above him. We know, too, that we must continue to supply that nurturing environment, not only through the hoops and hurdles of University bureaucracy, but also in terms of emotional support, for those Indian students with the courage to step into the "White Man's World."

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